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10/671,412

09/25/2003

Michael E. O'Donnell

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EXAMINER

HUTSON, RICHARD G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1652

DATE MAILED: 02/24/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

|                              |                                      |   |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Office Action Summary</b> | <b>Application No.</b><br>10/671,412 | <b>Applicant(s)</b><br>O'DONNELL ET AL. |  |
|                              | <b>Examiner</b><br>Richard G. Hutson | <b>Art Unit</b><br>1652                 |  |

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>9/2003</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____.  |

### **DETAILED ACTION**

Claims 1-9 are at issue and are present for examination.

#### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

The listing of references in the specification is not a proper information disclosure statement. 37 CFR 1.98(b) requires a list of all patents, publications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office, and MPEP § 609 A(1) states, "the list may not be incorporated into the specification but must be submitted in a separate paper."

Applicants filing of information disclosure statement filed on 9/25/2003, is acknowledged. Those references considered have been initialed.

#### ***Specification***

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

Applicants claim that the instant application is a continuation of Application Serial Number: 09/716,964, is objected to on the basis that the recitation in claims 1 and 5, "comprising at most about 0.9M sodium citrate buffer at a temperature of at least about 37°C" is not supported by the specification of Application Serial Number 09/716,964 and thus relative to the parent application would be considered new matter.

Appropriate correction is required.

#### ***Claim Objections***

Claims 1 and 5 are objected to because of the following informalities:

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Claims 1 and 5 each recite "hybridizes to the complement of SEQ ID NO: 183..."

For the sake of clarity it is suggested that these be amended to recite "hybridizes to the **complete** complement of SEQ ID NO: 183..."

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claims 1-9 are directed to all possible isolated DNA molecules from any *Bacillus* species encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme wherein said DNA molecule hybridizes to the complement of SEQ ID NO: 183, under conditions comprising at most about 0.9M sodium citrate buffer at a temperature of at least 37°C. The specification, however, only provides a single representative species isolated from *Bacillus stearothermophilus* comprising the complete nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 183, encompassed by these claims. There is no disclosure of any particular structure to function/activity relationship in the single disclosed species. The specification also fails to describe additional representative species of these enzymes

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by any identifying structural characteristics or properties other than the activities recited in claims 1-5, for which no predictability of structure is apparent. Given this lack of additional representative species as encompassed by the claims, Applicants have failed to sufficiently describe the claimed invention, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms that a skilled artisan would recognize Applicants were in possession of the claimed invention. In the instant specification, a single DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme is fully described in the form of SEQ ID NO: 183. It is noted that the references in claims 1, 3 and 4 to “an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 184” and “a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 183”, respectively, are interpreted as being drawn to multiple “subsequences” within SEQ ID NO: 183 and SEQ ID NO: 184.

Applicant is referred to the revised guidelines concerning compliance with the written description requirement of U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, published in the Official Gazette and also available at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov).

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for an isolated DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme, comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 183, does not reasonably provide enablement for any DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from any *Bacillus* species, hybridizing to the complement of SEQ ID NO: 183 under conditions comprising at most about 0.9M sodium citrate buffer at a temperature of at least about 37°C. The

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specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Factors to be considered in determining whether undue experimentation is required, are summarized in *In re Wands* (858 F.2d 731, 8 USPQ 2nd 1400 (Fed. Cir. 1988)) as follows: (1) the quantity of experimentation necessary, (2) the amount of direction or guidance presented, (3) the presence or absence of working examples, (4) the nature of the invention, (5) the state of the prior art, (6) the relative skill of those in the art, (7) the predictability or unpredictability of the art, and (8) the breadth of the claim(s).

Claims 1-9 are so broad as to encompass any DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from any *Bacillus* species, hybridizing to the complement of SEQ ID NO: 183, under conditions comprising at most about 0.9M sodium citrate buffer at a temperature of at least about 37°C. The scope of the claims is not commensurate with the enablement provided by the disclosure with regard to the extremely large number of DNA molecules broadly encompassed by the claims. The claims rejected under this section of U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, place minimal structural limits on the claimed DNA molecules. Since the amino acid sequence of a protein determines its structural and functional properties, predictability of which changes can be tolerated in a protein's amino acid sequence and the encoding nucleotide sequence and obtain the desired activity requires a knowledge of and guidance with regard to which amino acids in the protein's sequence, if any, are tolerant

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of modification and which are conserved (i.e. expectedly intolerant to modification), and detailed knowledge of the ways in which the proteins' structure relates to its function.

However, in this case the disclosure is limited to that DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme, comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 183.

While recombinant and mutagenesis techniques are known, it is not routine in the art to screen for multiple substitutions or multiple modifications, as encompassed by the instant claims, and the positions within a protein's sequence where amino acid modifications can be made with a reasonable expectation of success in obtaining the desired activity/utility are limited in any protein and the result of such modifications is unpredictable. In addition, one skilled in the art would expect any tolerance to modification for a given protein to diminish with each further and additional modification, e.g. multiple substitutions.

The specification does not support the broad scope of the claims which encompass all modifications and fragments of any DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from any *Bacillus* species, because the specification does not establish: (A) regions of the DNA and encoded protein structure which may be modified without effecting single-strand binding activity; (B) the general tolerance of PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme and encoding DNA to modification and extent of such tolerance; (C) a rational and predictable scheme for modifying any amino acid residue and the encoding nucleotide sequence of a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme with an expectation of obtaining the

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desired biological function; and (D) the specification provides insufficient guidance as to which of the essentially infinite possible choices is likely to be successful. Because of this lack of guidance, the extended experimentation that would be required to determine which substitutions would be acceptable to retain the single-strand binding activity claimed and the fact that the relationship between the sequence of a peptide and its tertiary structure (i.e. its activity) are not well understood and are not predictable (e.g., see Ngo et al. in *The Protein Folding Problem and Tertiary Structure Prediction*, 1994, Merz et al. (ed.), Birkhauser, Boston, MA, pp. 433 and 492-495, Ref: 65, IDS submitted on 9/25/2003), it would require undue experimentation for one skilled in the art to arrive at the majority of those DNA molecules of the claimed genus encoding a protein having the claimed single-strand binding activity.

Thus, applicants have not provided sufficient guidance to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the claimed invention in a manner reasonably correlated with the scope of the claims broadly including any DNA molecule encoding a PolC subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from any *Bacillus* species, hybridizing to the complement of SEQ ID NO: 183 under conditions comprising at most about 0.9M sodium citrate buffer at a temperature of at least about 37°C. The scope of the claims must bear a reasonable correlation with the scope of enablement (*In re Fisher*, 166 USPQ 19 24 (CCPA 1970)). Without sufficient guidance, determination of those DNA molecules having the desired biological characteristics is unpredictable and the experimentation left to those skilled in the art is unnecessarily, and improperly,



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extensive and undue. See *In re Wands* 858 F.2d 731, 8 USPQ2nd 1400 (Fed. Cir, 1988).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Richard G. Hutson whose telephone number is 571-272-0930. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 7:00-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ponnathapu Achutamurthy can be reached on 571-272-0928. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard G. Hutson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard G Hutson, Ph.D.  
Primary Examiner  
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rg  
2/16/2006